

The Wobblies in California: 20th Century Labor Struggles

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Abstract: Employers and large corporations feel threatened when workers unite to leverage bargaining power for better wages and working conditions. Historically, the government both federally and at the local level has used its power to pass laws to prevent or impede unions, such as the right to protest. Examining the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in California during the early part of the 20th century will show how the history and struggle that unions encountered are still faced today. The free speech fights in Fresno and San Diego, the Wheatland Hop Riot, and the 1917 bombing of the governor's mansion in Sacramento are examples of past struggles that the IWW faced. These past events should not be forgotten in America's labor history.